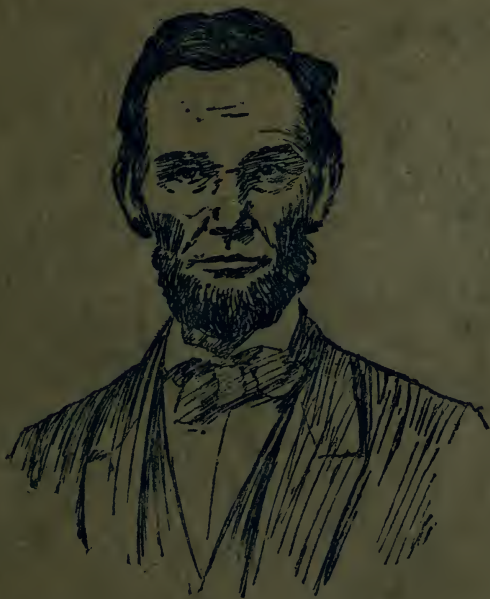


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PREFACE.

IN this little book I have tried to give an outline picture of the rise to greatness of one of the greatest men in the world's history. It can only be an outline, for Abraham Lincoln touched life at so many points, and occupied so commanding a position at the most critical period in the history of his country, that to write his story at length would fill many books like this. But I hope that even in this short sketch I have been able to show what kind of man Lincoln was, and why he is justly the hero of the United States. If Washington was the Father of his country, Abraham Lincoln was its Saviour. The poor farmer's son found himself at a moment of acute national danger with the destiny of the Nation in his hands. It was an immense task, but he accomplished it. He found disunion and hatred among men of the same blood and speech ; he left union and peace. He found slavery, and left freedom. He found wrong triumphant, and left justice. No man ever did more noble work, nor did it more nobly. " With malice toward none ; with charity for all ; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in." In that spirit Lincoln entered upon and completed his life task. In that spirit let each one of us, however humble our position in life, however lowly our capabilities, strive to do what is given to us to do, so that at the least we may leave the world, as he did, a better place than we found it.

N.C.-J.



G. Beuzeville

ABRAHAM
LINCOLN
1809-1865

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

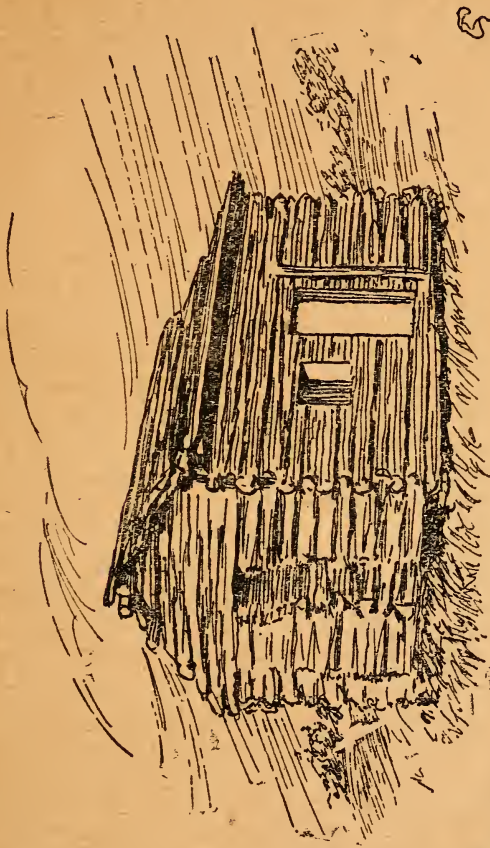
Chapter I.—LOG-CABIN DAYS.

IN the year 1809 a traveller setting out from the village of Elizabethtown, in Kentucky, would have come in time to a lonely miserable log-cabin in the midst of a bare, desolate, rocky tract of country, which even the sunshine could not make cheerful. The only pleasant thing in sight was a little silvery spring of fresh water, after which the place was called "Rock Spring Farm." But it was not properly a farm at all, only a hut in the wilderness, without floors or windows or chimneys or rooms; just a square of roughly hewn logs, roofed over and giving shelter from the weather, but little else. Yet the place where this dismal cabin once stood is one of the most famous in American history, for in it was born Abraham Lincoln, the boy who was destined to become President of the United States, and to free America from the shame of slavery.

No boy ever had a less hopeful start in life, but this was not altogether the fault of his father, Thomas Lincoln. His father, the first Abraham Lincoln, had started out, full of hope, to make his fortune in the

vast new unexplored lands of the north-west, when Thomas was only two years old. But within four years he was dead, killed by a band of marauding Indians, who would have kidnapped Thomas himself if his elder brother had not shot one of them through the head, and driven the others away. The loss of the father meant the scattering of the family, and Thomas was left to grow up from boyhood to youth, and from youth to manhood as best he might, with no one to teach him and no one to take care of him ; so that when his son Abraham was born he could neither read nor write, and knew a little about many trades, but not much of any. He was a kindly, good-natured, easy-going man, but he never made any money, and never seemed to make a success of anything he did. It would have been a poor look-out for little Abraham and his elder sister, Sarah, if they had not had a splendid, practical-mother, who saw that they were properly fed and clothed and looked after.

At the time when Abraham was born, on February 12th, 1809, ten years before our own Queen Victoria, Thomas Lincoln was trying his hand at farming, not with very great success. Life for the early pioneers was a hard struggle at the best, and when things went wrong, as they often did, they had to endure serious hardships. These isolated log-cabin homes, like the Lincoln one at Rock Spring Farm, were often many miles from each other. There were no towns, and of course no shops, and each little homestead had to depend entirely on itself. Every pioneer family had to grow its own corn, mill it into flour, and bake the flour into bread ; it had to make its own clothes ; its only meat was the game that the men of



The house where
Abraham Lincoln
was born. ~ ~ ~

Greenville

the family could kill ; and altogether it lived a Robinson Crusoe sort of life. When the crops failed or the game became scarce or droughts dried up the springs, the pioneers sometimes came very near to starvation. So, when Abraham was four years old, his father decided that the thankless bit of land at Rock Spring must be given up, and he moved his young family to a more promising place called Knob Creek. Here Abraham, or " Abe," as everybody called him, began to take his part in games with the other children ; he played about in the water (once nearly drowning himself, but getting fished out in time by a playmate, Billy Gallaher), and although he was little more than a baby, showed himself as keen and venturesome as the others. But Knob Creek was no more successful than Rock Spring, and in 1816 Thomas Lincoln decided on another and more important move.

Leaving his family in Kentucky, he built a flat boat or raft, and went down the river in search of a new home. He found what he wanted near a place called Gentryville, in Indiana, and on his return packed Mrs. Lincoln, Sarah, Abraham, and all his worldly goods on two borrowed horses, and the quaint little procession started off. The journey was only a hundred miles, but it took seven days. They camped out at nights with no covering but the stars, and no bed but blankets spread upon the ground. When they arrived the first thing to do was to make themselves a shelter. To build a proper log-cabin would take too long, so Abraham's father decided to make a " half-faced camp," a shed of poles, protected only on three sides, and, as you may guess, a very cold place in the winter. But here the family lived for nearly a year, while Thomas Lincoln cleared a

patch of ground for the corn, and cut the logs ready for the real cabin to be built in the spring. Abraham, although he was only a small boy, helped his father quite a lot, and began to be very useful with an axe. The cabin, when built, was a famous affair. It was about eighteen feet long, by sixteen feet wide, without a floor, the unhewn logs being fitted into each other at the corners by notches, and the chinks and cracks between them stopped up with clay. It had a shed-roof, covered with slabs of wood split from logs. There was only one room, with a loft, and the cabin had one door and one window. In the room was a table made of a hewn log, some stools, also made of logs, and a bedstead in the corner made out of poles. That was all the furniture, but it was quite enough for a pioneer family which was well used to roughing it. The loft was Abraham's bedroom, and he used to clamber into it every night by a ladder of wooden pins driven into one corner of the cabin. He had a soft bed of leaves, covered with a blanket, and you may be sure that he was as happy and slept as soundly there as any child in the world. You see, it was what he was used to, and he had probably never heard of soft, downy beds with pillows; besides, at the end of a hard day's work he was so tired that he could have slept cheerfully on the bare ground.

For he did work hard. The children of the pioneers had to work. Abraham used to help his father in the fields, sowing and reaping and milling the corn, cutting down undergrowth and trees, to win a little more corn-bearing land from the wilderness, drawing water, and doing the thousand and one odd jobs that a healthy, active boy can do to assist his parents. But his life was not all work. There

were other children to play with, and it was a great day for him when he shot his first turkey with his father's gun. He was also beginning to take a great interest in reading. He very early learnt his letters, and it was not long before his father and mother realised that he was a very clever boy. Of course, there were no schools in those new lands—indeed in all his life Lincoln had less than a year's schooling—but now and then a man would appear who would open school for a few weeks before moving on somewhere else, and whenever this happened Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln would try to send Sarah and Abraham, if it were not too far away. The schoolmaster often did not know very much himself, and one or two of them had taught the boy all they knew in a very few weeks; but it all helped. Had it not been for these wandering teachers there is little likelihood that Abraham would have learned to read and write so young, and it is almost certain that without these advantages he could never have risen so fast or so high. The teaching, small as it was, at least made him master of the only three books that were to be found in the Lincoln log-cabin, the Bible, the Catechism, and a spelling book. Having no others, the boy read and re-read these until he had large parts of them by heart. During the long winter evenings in Indiana he would lie at full length in front of the cabin fire, reading by the firelight, and it came to be an understood thing in the family that he must not be disturbed. Having no paper, he practised writing with a charred stick on the bark of trees and slabs of wood, or in winter on the snow outside the cabin door. His father sometimes complained that he neglected his work to read, but his



HE PRACTISED WRITING WITH A STICK IN THE SNOW.

mother used to say, "Let the boy be! If he wants to study, let him. It will help him in the end."

But now a great sorrow was to come to the boy. A fearful disease broke out among the settlers, called the "milk-sickness." Abraham's mother fell ill and died, and with his own hands her poor husband had to make her rough coffin and bury her, without any service, for there was no clergyman for miles around. The boy, who was only nine years old, grieved terribly, and when he heard that a wandering preacher had come into the district he tramped many miles to find him and bring him back to preach a sermon over his mother's grave. The loss was grievous, and it was a sad winter that the Lincolns spent in their cabin home. Not even the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which his father brought home one day, and which Abraham devoured eagerly, could banish the boy's sorrow. However, in the autumn of the next year his father married again, and Abraham found a new mother whom all his life long he loved and honoured almost as much as the real mother he had lost. The new Mrs. Lincoln was a splendid, capable woman, with children of her own, who in no time made the neglected log-cabin a bright, cheerful, happy place again. She soon saw that Abraham was an unusual boy, and exerted all her influence to help him on in his studies. In the winter that she came to Gentryville a real school was opened. Abraham, of course, went, and at once proved himself the cleverest of the children there. He took a great joy in arithmetic and spelling, and although the school did not remain open very long, he learned a good deal which was very useful to him afterwards. One of his masters said, "Abe is a

wonderful boy—the best scholar I ever had. He's never satisfied without knowing all about his lessons. He wants to know everything that anybody else knows."

Chapter II.—HARD WORK AND HARD PLAY.

AND so the years rolled on. The hard, healthy life of the pioneer suited Abraham splendidly. He grew strong and tall, until by the time he was fourteen he was a match for any boy of his age for miles around, and a very real help to his father, for he could do almost a man's work. But he never abused his strength. He was the leader of the children both in school and out. They came to him in all their troubles, and though he sternly put down bullying, he always acted as peacemaker when he could. One of his great gifts was story-telling, and when his companions were tired of running, jumping, swimming or wrestling, they would gather round him and call for a story. Then he would tell story after story, either out of *Robinson Crusoe* or *Æsop's Fables* or some other book he had read, or made up out of his own head, and keep them amused for hours at a time. But still he was happiest when he was left alone to read. Dennis Hanks, his cousin, who went to live with the Lincolns when Abraham was fourteen, said, "When Abe and I returned to the house from work, he would go to the cupboard, snatch a piece of cornbread, take down a book, sit down on a



HE WOULD TELL HIS COMPANIONS STORY AFTER STORY.

chair, cross his legs as high as his head, and read. He and I worked bare-footed, grubbed it, ploughed, mowed, and cradled together; ploughed corn, gathered it, and shucked corn. Abraham read constantly when he had a chance." If he had nothing else he would pore over a dictionary by the hour. But unless he stole it he hadn't much time for reading, for when he was fifteen his father decided that he was old enough and strong enough to go out and work for some of the neighbouring farmers for a living. He earned very little, and worked very hard for it, but he never minded hard work. He could turn his hand to everything—farmer, hostler, house-servant, butcher, minding babies, ferryman, nothing came amiss to him; but he preferred ferrying to almost anything. Being a boy, he naturally loved boating, and he liked to feel that he could handle a boat as well as any man. At seventeen years old Lincoln was six feet four inches tall, and the strongest and the gentlest man in the neighbourhood. Everybody loved him, even the farmers, who sometimes grumbled that they couldn't get any work done when Lincoln was about, because everybody was clustered near him listening to his stories or a stump speech or sermon. He was never known to do or say a mean or unkind or dishonest thing; without being in the least priggish, his influence was all for good, and he was liked and trusted wherever he went. And so, working hard and playing hard, Abraham Lincoln was growing from a bright, promising boy to a noble manhood.

Chapter III.—SEEING THE WORLD.

WHEN Abraham was nineteen years old, he was given his first chance of seeing the world. In those days travelling in America was very difficult and even dangerous. There were no railways, and all journeys had to be made on foot, on horseback, or by water. Sometimes a traveller never saw another man for days together, and apart from the loneliness and the hardships of the country through which he passed, there was always the chance of being attacked by Indians or negroes or wild beasts. There were, of course, no market towns where the early settlers could go week by week to sell their corn and bacon and produce, so they used to wait until they had enough to fill a wagon or flat boat, and then join together to send a man whom they trusted with the whole lot to some big town like St. Louis or New Orleans, many hundreds of miles away. You can imagine, then, how pleased and proud young Lincoln was when one day his employer, old Mr. Gentry of Gentryville, told him that he was going to send him with his own son, Allen, to New Orleans, nearly two thousand miles away, with a valuable cargo. Abraham jumped at the chance, and easily obtaining his parent's consent, he and Allen Gentry started off on a flat boat, for the whole of the journey had to be made by river. It was no child's play, for the Mississippi is a mighty river, broad and strong and deep, but the young men enjoyed every minute of the trip, and after many adventures, including a

hot fight with a gang of negroes, who tried to murder them one night and steal their precious cargo, they arrived safely at New Orleans. This voyage was a landmark in Lincoln's life. For the first time he realised what a wonderful place the world was, and what chances it offered to lads of grit and ambition, and he came back fired with the desire to go forth to seek his fortune.

But before leaving home for good he helped his father to make another move. For some time Thomas Lincoln had been getting restless. The little homestead at Gentryville was not very successful, and was full of sad memories, and hearing glowing tales of a new land of plenty to be found in Sangamon County, Illinois, he decided to go there with some friends. So once more all the household goods were piled on a wagon drawn by two yoke of oxen, and in January, 1830, a few days before Abraham's twenty-first birthday, the party started off. The new home was only two hundred miles from the old one, but they were a fortnight on the way, for the country was very rough. For miles at a time Abraham, who usually walked, was squelching through mud a foot thick, and once both wagon and oxen were nearly swept away in fording a flooded river. But no one could be sad or depressed when Abraham was about; his pluck and jokes kept up the spirits of the whole party, and in time they arrived at the chosen spot. Then he and his father and Dennis Hanks set to work to build a fine log-cabin, although their only tools were an axe, a hand-saw and a "drawer-knife," and that done, they added a smoke-house and stable, and cleared and fenced in fifteen acres of ground for the

corn. One of Abraham's last acts before he left home was to split the rails for this fence.

You may be interested to hear what Abraham Lincoln looked like at this time. Well, he must have been a strange figure. He was, as you know, very tall and lanky, with big hands and feet, and loose, awkward limbs ; his face was rugged and his hair untidy, and his best friend could not have called him handsome, but there was something in his steady eyes, a look of honesty and sincerity, which deeply impressed everyone who met him. He dressed no better, and no worse, than other men in a land where all his clothes were home-grown and home-made. A friend wrote of him :—" He wore flax and tow linen pantaloons—I thought about five inches too short in the legs—and frequently he had but one suspender, no vest or coat. He wore a calico shirt, such as he had in the Black Hawk War ; coarse brogans, tan colour, blue yarn socks, and straw hat, old style, and without a band."

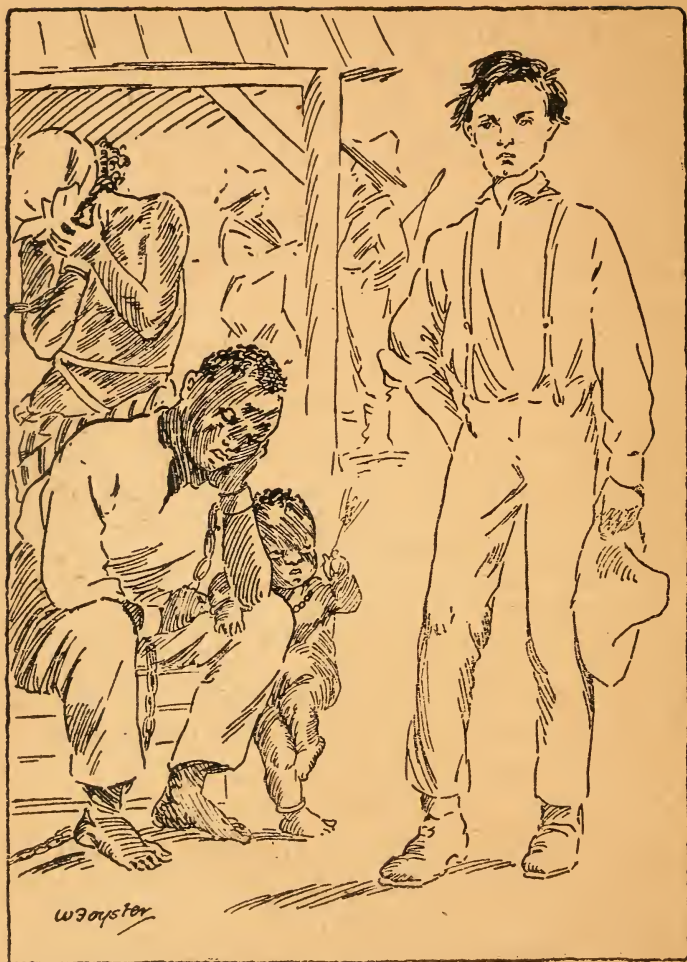
Chapter IV.—SEEKING FORTUNE.

So, with no fortune but his strong hands and his wits and his ambition, the future President of the United States wandered off from his father's log-cabin until he came to the rising village of New Salem, in Illinois. Here he fell in with Daniel Offutt, who kept a store, and for him he made another

flat boat trip to New Orleans. It was now that the wickedness of slavery was first brought home to him. New Orleans and St. Louis were the great slave-markets of the South, and on his way down, Lincoln saw many pitiful gangs of slaves shackled together in irons, whipped, bullied, and ill-treated. The sight cut him to the heart, and was a perpetual torture to him, but the raw pioneer youth little knew at the time that it was he who was destined to rid America of the curse and shame of slavery.

After his return from New Orleans, Daniel Offutt gave Lincoln the post of store-keeper at his New Salem store, and here he spent some pleasant and useful months. He had some trouble at first with the Clary Grove Boys, a gang of rough youths and young men who were a terror to the people of New Salem, and whose chief hobby it was to make life unbearable to any newcomer. But they met their match in Abraham. He bore their taunts and jeers in silence for some time, but at last, realising that he would have no peace or quiet until the bullies were taught a lesson, he gave their leader, Jack Armstrong, a sound thrashing, thereby gaining the respect and admiration of the Clary Grove Boys, who never gave him any trouble afterwards. Abraham Lincoln never fought unless he had to, but when he did he always won.

On the whole Lincoln thoroughly enjoyed being at Offutt's store. Selling groceries over the counter was easy work to an ex-backwoodsman, and for almost the first time in his life he found himself with plenty of leisure to read. With great difficulty, for there was no one to help him, he managed to teach himself English grammar, and his feat earned him



THE SIGHT OF SHACKLED SLAVES CUT HIM TO THE HEART.

great admiration, for no one in New Salem had ever thought of doing so before. But what he enjoyed almost as much as the reading were the long discussions which took place in the evenings at the store, when all the men of the village used to gather round and smoke and talk of the great things which Illinois was going to do in the near future. Here Lincoln was in his element. He soon showed himself the best-read and sharpest-witted man there, and the best speaker, and before he had been many weeks in New Salem he was the master of the little circle. Even in managing a village store a man can show what he is made of, and when the store had to close down—which it did in a year or two, through no fault of Lincoln's—he had firmly established his position. When he left Offutt's service, said one who had known him, long afterwards, "Everyone trusted him. He was judge, arbitrator, referee, umpire, authority in all disputes, games, and matches of man-flesh and horse-flesh; a participator in all quarrels, everybody's friend, the best-natured, the most sensible, the best informed, the most modest and unassuming, the kindest, gentlest, roughest, strongest, best young fellow in all New Salem and the region round about."

Chapter V.—SOLDIER, POLITICIAN AND LAWYER.

BEING once more out of employment, Lincoln thought he might as well do a little soldiering. The

Black Hawk War against the Indians was going on, and when the Governor of Illinois called for volunteers, New Salem raised a company, of which Lincoln was unanimously elected captain. The Clary Grove Boys enlisted in a body. The war was short and sharp, and Lincoln saw no real fighting. When it was over, he tramped back to New Salem, and had serious thoughts of becoming a blacksmith, but instead decided to set up as a merchant. His partner turned out to be a rogue, and ran off one day with all the money, leaving Lincoln to pay the debts. He paid back every penny, but it took him many years to do so. About this time the young man was appointed postmaster of New Salem, which shows the good opinion people had of him. It was not very hard work, for letters were few and far between, but when he had any to deliver he would stick them in his hat, put his hat on his head, and start off gaily on his rounds. This, and the post of Deputy Surveyor to Sangamon County, which he also held, gave him plenty of work, and brought him in touch with all sorts and conditions of people all over Sangamon County. Wherever he went he was popular, and it is not surprising that only four years after he came to New Salem he was elected a member of the State Legislature of Illinois. The people of New Salem knew a good man when they saw him, and were well content to let him look after their interests in the Illinois Parliament. This election was another landmark in Lincoln's life. He had passed from a private citizen to a public man. The log-cabin and the woodman's axe were left far behind, and his feet were set on the road which led straight to the Presidency of the United States

Lincoln remained a member of the Illinois Legislature for eight years, and did good work there, but I have no space here to tell you about it. Three very important things, however, happened to him in these years. First, he decided to give up all idea of being a blacksmith, and become a lawyer ; secondly, he moved from New Salem to Springfield, which had just become the capital of Illinois ; and thirdly, he married.

There is a pretty story of his moving to Springfield. A Mr. Stuart, who was a well-known lawyer there, and who more than anyone had encouraged Lincoln to be a lawyer, offered to make him a partner in his business if he would join him. So one day Lincoln packed all his worldly goods, consisting mostly of law books and a few old clothes, into two saddle bags, and borrowing a horse he rode into the city, which he was never to leave except as President of the United States. He had no money and very few friends in Springfield, so after hiring a single bedstead from the only cabinet-maker there, he marched into the village store, and demanded the price of blankets and pillows. The storekeeper, Mr. Joshua Speed, said they would come to seventeen dollars. Lincoln's face fell, and he answered gloomily, " It is probably cheap enough, but I want to save that, cheap as it is. I have not the money to pay, but if you will credit me until Christmas, and my experiment here as a lawyer is a success, I will pay you then ; if I fail in that, I shall probably never be able to pay you at all." Speed, as he looked at him, thought he had never seen so melancholy a face in all his life. But he liked the face, and offered to share with Lincoln his own large double bed, which stood in a

room above the store. "Where is the room?" said Lincoln. "Upstairs." Lincoln slung his saddle-bags over his arm, and without saying a word went upstairs, dumped them down on the floor, came down again, and with a beaming face exclaimed, "Well, Speed, I've moved!" The friendship so quaintly begun lasted as long as both men lived.

In Springfield, as everywhere else, Lincoln soon made many friends. Mr. Stuart was very good to him, and he began to make great headway in his chosen profession. Within ten years after he left his log-cabin home men would look after him in the street and say "There goes one of the ablest lawyers in Illinois." All his life long he was noted for one thing: he would never take a case up if he did not believe it to be a just one. Once a stranger came to ask his advice.

"State your case," said Lincoln. When he had heard it he surprised the man by saying:

"I cannot serve you, for you are wrong."

"That is none of your business, if I hire and pay for your services," retorted the man.

"None of my business!" exclaimed Lincoln. "My business is never to defend wrong. I never take a case that is manifestly wrong."

"Well, you can make trouble for the other fellow," said the stranger.

"Yes, there is no reasonable doubt that I can win the case for you. I can set a whole neighbourhood by the ears; I can distress a widowed mother and her six fatherless children, and thereby get for you six hundred dollars, which rightfully belong as much to them as to you. But I won't do it."

"Not for any amount of pay?" inquired the man.

"Not for all you are worth," Lincoln replied. "You must remember that some things which are legally right are morally wrong. I shall not take up your case."

That was just like Lincoln. It is little wonder that he was known far and wide as the friend of the poor and oppressed. The poor people turned to him naturally for help, and he never failed them. If, as often happened, they could not pay him, he worked for them for nothing. Lincoln was never rich in money, but no man ever lived who was richer in what is worth far more than money, the love and respect of his fellow countrymen.

Chapter VI.—SLAVERY.

AND now the time was approaching when the name of Lincoln was to be heard far beyond the borders of his own State. In order to make you understand exactly why this poor pioneer boy was forced, almost in spite of himself, into a position of greatness, I must tell you as shortly as possible a little about the disputes over slavery which divided the Northern and Southern States of America, and led in the end to the bitterest Civil War the world has ever seen. In the South, where the chief business was the growing of cotton and sugar and tobacco, negro slavery

had been the custom from the very earliest days, and the landowners of the South did not see anything wrong in it. White labour was so scarce that if they were not allowed to have slaves they would not be able to work their plantations, and must starve. Slavery, they said, was not a bad thing in itself; in their own interests the masters saw that their slaves were well fed and looked after, and on the whole the negroes were better off than they would have been as free men, and did not complain of their lot. There were, of course, a few bad and cruel masters, but these were the exception, not the rule.

But in the North, where there were not many slaves, men thought differently. They felt, just as we all feel to-day, that if a man is not free, he is nothing. No amount of kindness or good treatment can make up to him for his loss of liberty. The Northerners looked on the whole system of slavery as a disgrace to the good name of America, and they were determined to stamp it out as soon as they could. But the more moderate men realised that it could not be done at once, for to take away their slaves suddenly from the slave-owners of the South would be as unfair as to take away their land or money, and would mean the ruin of thousands of them. So, although they hoped that sooner or later the South would come to realise that slavery was a bad and wicked thing, and abolish it, most of the Northerners in the meantime contented themselves with saying that slavery should not be allowed to spread to any of the States where it was not already the custom, nor to any new State. You must bear in mind that at this time the United States was not nearly as big

as it is to-day. In the South and West there were vast territories, such as Texas, New Mexico, and California, which in 1840 were only half explored; but it was hoped that as time went on, and America grew in wealth and population and importance, these lands would become part of the United States. The anti-slavery party therefore devoted all its efforts to prevent the spread of slavery here.

You would have thought this was reasonable enough, but it did not suit the South at all. The slave-holders, I am afraid, cared less for their country than for themselves, and when the question arose of Texas, and later of the land won from Mexico in the Mexican War being annexed to the United States, they insisted that they should have the right of choosing whether or not they would have slavery. Fierce disputes broke out between the two parties, and Lincoln, who had been against slavery all his life, was elected to the United States Congress by Illinois in 1846 to oppose the extension of the system with all his might. But the slavery party was too strong just then, and won all along the line, and when the end of the session arrived, Lincoln went back home deeply disappointed, and stayed out of politics for some years.

Chapter VII.—MARRIAGE AND HOME LIFE.

THIS must be a very short chapter, because it is one of the sacrifices that must be made by men like



Mary Todd Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln who devote their lives to the service of their country that they can have very little home life with their wives and families. This was a very real sacrifice to Lincoln, for he was a very "homey" man, and adored his children. When he was a young man at New Salem, he fell in love with a charming girl, Miss Ann Rutledge, and was going to marry her. But she died very suddenly, leaving him broken-hearted, and it was not until he went to Springfield and met Miss Mary Todd, a very beautiful and clever girl some way above him in rank, that he was really happy again. He married her in 1842, and they had four children, all boys. One, Edwards, died as a baby; another, William, was only twelve years old when he died at Washington, to his father's bitter grief; the youngest, Thomas, who was called "Tad" by everybody, was quite a small boy when his father became President, and was perhaps the favourite, but he, too, died young; and the only one who lived to manhood was the eldest, Robert. Lincoln was a splendid father; he was always a boy at heart, and entered into all his children's games like one of themselves. Even when he was President, and bowed down with the cares of the great war, he would often steal away from his Ministers, and after a great hue and cry had been made, would be found in the midst of a romp with Tad and any other children he could get to play with him. Mrs. Lincoln used to say, laughingly, that he was the greatest baby of them all.



HE ENTERED INTO ALL HIS CHILDREN'S GAMES.

Chapter VIII.—THE RISING OF THE STORM.

BUT these happy, peaceful days could not last. While Lincoln was living quietly at home at Springfield, only appearing in public now and then to make a ringing anti-slavery speech, the country was drifting nearer and nearer to Civil War. Not content with their victory over Texas and the Mexican lands, the Southern Party became bolder. By an agreement made some years earlier, known as the Missouri Compromise, a line had been drawn north of which no States were to be admitted to the Union except as free States. In spite of this the South now proposed to admit two States lying well to the north of this line, Kansas and Nebraska, as slave States. This breach of faith roused the North to fury, and Lincoln saw that the time had come for a firm stand to be made for truth and justice. By a strange chance the man who wished to break the agreement, Stephen Douglas, himself came from Springfield, and it soon became clear that in these two, Douglas and Lincoln, were summed up the rival views upon the settlement of which depended the whole future and happiness of the United States.

Lincoln made no mistake about the deadliness of the fight. Douglas had all the advantages on his side—except one. He was wealthy, polished, educated, brilliantly clever, very popular, well-known all over America, and, indeed, marked out as the next President. But he was fighting in a bad cause, and he knew it. Lincoln, for all his poverty,

his rough exterior, his inferior education, and his being almost unknown outside his own State of Illinois, had the right on his side. "A nation cannot exist half slave and half free," he said, and he went up and down the country driving this lesson home into the hearts of his countrymen. Wherever Douglas made a speech, Lincoln spoke too. He challenged him to a series of set debates, which Douglas very reluctantly agreed to, for, as he told a friend, he knew he would have his hands full. He was right. Before the debates were half over the enemies of slavery all over America realised that in this unknown man called Lincoln they had found their leader and champion. When they were finished Lincoln knew he had done his work. He had prevented the pro-slavery Douglas from becoming President of the United States at the most critical moment of its history.

Chapter IX.—PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

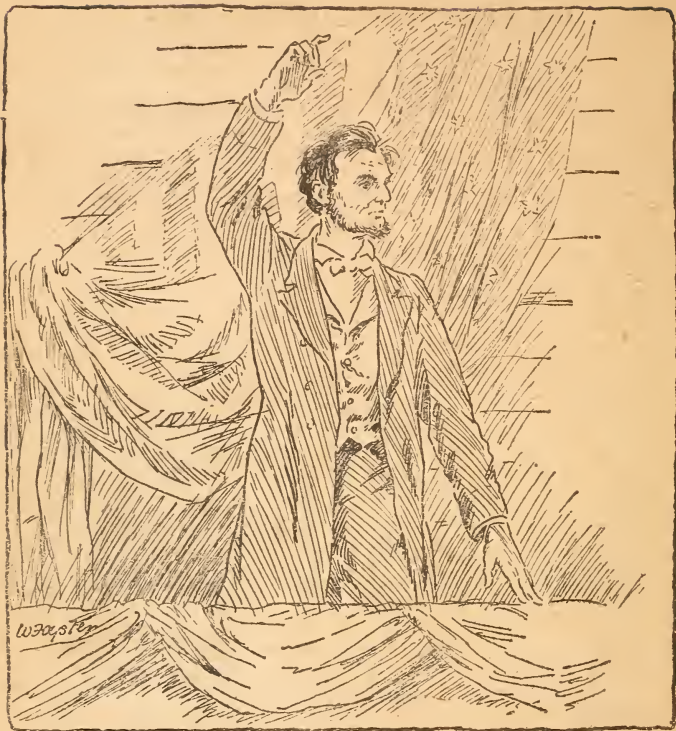
ON June 16th, 1860, Abraham Lincoln was nominated the Republican candidate for President, and in the following November he was elected.

No man was ever in a more difficult position. To vast numbers even of his own party his election came as a complete surprise. The grave statesmen of

New York and Washington cannot be blamed if they viewed the advent of this comparatively young, untried, and unknown man from the West with some misgivings. His speeches they knew, but not himself. His words were good, but would he have the strength to act up to them? If ever there was need for courage, wisdom, and strength it was now. The times were very critical. Would the new President show himself worthy of his trust?

But if even the friendly North was a little doubtful of Lincoln, you can imagine how the pro-slavery South raged at the coming of the man who had shown himself the most relentless enemy of slavery. They called him every bad name they knew; they plotted to murder him before he could take up his office; they swore that the day he took the oath as President at Washington the Southern States would secede from the Union. The whole country boiled and seethed round the man who was called by God to save it from itself.

All this turmoil, however, had no effect on Lincoln. Having made up his mind what to do, he never turned back. Distrust, anger, abuse, threats, never moved him one inch from his settled purpose. He steadfastly went his own way, determined, at all costs, to save the Union, without fighting if possible, but in any case to save it. And so, in due course, the man who had started life in a log-cabin found himself installed in the White House at Washington, President of the United States of America, with the destinies of his country in his hands.



"You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it We must not be enemies."

Chapter X.—THE CIVIL WAR.

LINCOLN'S first act as President was to make a touching appeal to the enemies of the Government to shake hands and make friends. He said:—"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without yourselves being the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government; while I have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it. I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

But his pleading was of no avail. The South were determined for war, and the first shots were fired by them at Fort Sumter, on April 12th, 1861. Those fatal shots introduced four long and bitter years of warfare. The country was steeped in blood and misery from end to end, and though we are bound to admire the South for the gallant fight they made against overwhelming odds, yet our sympathies must be with the North in this tragic struggle. Civil war is the most terrible of all forms of war, for it is waged between people of the same race and language, brother

fighting against brother, father against son. Yet the worst Civil War ever known was forced by the Confederate States for a cause which was bad and unjust. They pretended that they were fighting for freedom, for the right, having joined the United States, to break away when they liked ; but in reality, they were fighting for slavery. The result of the war was that the slaves were freed, and that the United States again became one nation, but if Lincoln had had his way these results would have been gained without the shedding of a single drop of blood. He held out the olive-branch, but the answer was the sword.

I cannot here tell you much about the war. You must turn to the history books for that. Nor can I say much of Lincoln's public work as President—how he formed a mighty army of two million men, created a navy, preserved the public credit at home and abroad, emancipated four million slaves, kept up the spirits of the North in fair weather and foul, managed his rather troublesome Ministers and generals with a gentle, wise and firm hand, and finally brought about an honourable and lasting peace. The story of all these things would fill many books like this, and the most I can do is to show you generally the kind of life he lived at the White House.

He had a very difficult time. At first the North thought the war would be soon over, and were full of enthusiasm. But as the weeks lengthened into months, and the months into years, the enthusiasm waned, and Lincoln got blamed for every mishap that occurred. If a battle was lost, he was blamed for having chosen the wrong generals ; if he interfered with the armies he was blamed ; if he didn't interfere

he was blamed just as much. Some men said he went too slow, others too fast ; some that he ought to make peace at once, others that he should arm the negroes so as to wage the war more forcibly ; when he emancipated the negroes, some said it should have been done long ago, others that it ought not to have been done at all. In fact, whatever he did or did not do, there was always someone handy to tell him that he had done wrong, and his own Ministers were not the least troublesome of these busybodies. But all the time he kept straight on towards the goal on which his eyes were fixed. He could see further into the future than anyone else, and knew that out of evil must come good. So he held on his way, always patient, always wise, always kind, always far-seeing, making allowances for ill-timed criticism. Delays and failures and defeats did not matter to him, for he knew that in the long run there must be victory. And so brave and strong and steadfast was he that long before the end of the war his real greatness was recognised by everybody, and from being, if not hated, at least not loved, he became the best beloved man in the country.

The soldiers adored him, and called him " Father Abraham," and he was never happier than when visiting them in their camps and hospitals. One of the tasks which he most hated was the signing of orders for the execution of deserters. Whenever there was any chance whatever of letting one of these men off he would do so, often putting himself to no end of trouble to find out the real facts of the case, and several times his generals had to complain of his leniency, saying that it was upsetting the discipline of the Army. Although he was President,



ALTHOUGH HE WAS PRESIDENT, HE WAS AS SIMPLE AND GET-AT-ABLE AS HE
ALWAYS HAD BEEN

he was as simple and get-at-able as he had always been. Any poor woman who had a petition to make, any old friend, any soldier, was made as welcome at the White House as the highest in the land, and his secretaries had to use all their skill to prevent too much of his time from being taken up with listening to trivial complaints and requests. The negroes, too, adored him, as well they might, for he had turned them from slaves into men.

So the long, bitter, war-laden years rolled by. The corner was turned at last, and Lincoln, although he had been elected to a second term of office, was looking forward to spending the last years of his life peacefully at Springfield with his family. He was still a comparatively young man, only fifty-five, but the war had aged him terribly, and he was very weary. For four years he had borne alone a crushing weight of responsibility and care, and was almost worn out. But having set his hand to the plough, he scorned to turn back until his task was done. It was nearly finished, and he longed for the day when he could lay down his burden and be at rest. It was to come sooner than he knew.

Chapter XI.—THE ASSASSIN'S BULLET.

ON April 10th, 1865, General Robert E. Lee, the commander of the Confederate Army, laid down his arms at Appomattox, and the war was over. The



THE POOR BROKEN BODY WAS BORNE REVERENTLY THROUGH THE
WEEPING CROWD.

glad news was flashed from end to end of the country. The task that Lincoln had set himself to do he had done ; he had crushed the Rebellion, and saved the Union, and slavery no more existed in the United States. That day Abraham Lincoln was hailed as the father of his people, and we may imagine with what joy and thanksgiving in his heart he realised that his work was over.

The 14th of April was set apart as a National holiday and thanksgiving. At Ford's Theatre, Washington, a gala performance was to be given, at which the President and his party were to be present. They came in a little late, and the vast audience rose to their feet and cheered and cheered again. There must have been many present who felt that this rugged, care-worn man had truly been sent from God. Then the audience settled down to enjoy the play. No one noticed a figure stealing towards the President's box, until suddenly a shot rang out, and Lincoln fell back in his seat. A man with a smoking pistol in his hand jumped from the box on to the stage, shouting wildly, " So perish all tyrants !" and fled. Although his leg was broken in the jump everybody was so horror-stricken that no one tried to prevent him, and he escaped for the time being, only to be caught and killed a few days later. All eyes were turned to the dying President. The bullet had entered the back of his head, passing through the brain, and the case was hopeless from the first. The poor broken body was borne reverently through the weeping crowd to a house opposite the theatre, and there, on the following day, in the hour of his supreme triumph, Abraham Lincoln died.

Chapter XII.—“GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN.”

THE death of Abraham Lincoln by the hand of an assassin stunned the world. When the dreadful news flashed over the wires the people, joyfully celebrating the peace which he had won for them, at first refused to believe it. But when the truth began to be realised it was as if the sun had been taken away. The triumphal trappings of victory were torn down, and in their place the cities and villages and far remote hamlets of America put on mourning for the illustrious dead. Never was mourning more heartfelt, for to every man, woman, and child Lincoln's death came like the personal loss of one very dear. Above all, the negroes mourned, as well they might, the man who had given his life that they might be free.

It was decided to bury the murdered President at Springfield. His body had been removed to the White House and embalmed, and after the funeral service for a day and a night countless thousands of weeping men and women filed past the bier to say farewell to their beloved ruler. The funeral train left Washington on its long journey to the West, on the morning of April 21st, 1865. With the casket of the President was borne that of his son Willie, who had died at the White House. Perhaps nothing like that journey was ever seen in the world before. At most of the large cities—at Baltimore, through which four years earlier the new President had had to pass by

night lest an attempt might be made on his life, at Philadelphia, at New York, at Albany, at Cleveland, at Indianapolis, at Chicago—the train stopped for some hours or even days to allow the sorrowing people to pay their last respects to the mighty dead ; but what was more wonderful and moving, at every village and wayside station through which the train passed, almost along every yard of that sixteen hundred-mile march was a black line of mourners. And so at last, just a fortnight from the time when the *cortège* left Washington, Abraham Lincoln came home to Springfield, and was at rest.

Fifty-three years have passed since Lincoln died, but to-day his goodness and greatness shine out more strongly than ever. Born in a log-cabin of humble parents who could give him no advantages, he rose by sheer force of character and intellect to be President of the United States. That in itself was wonderful, but other men have done as much, and Lincoln's claim to the undying gratitude of his country and the world does not rest on that alone. He is the hero of his people because, coming to power at a time when the future of the Republic was trembling in the balance, when the United States were in deadly danger of becoming disunited, when the evil of slavery was poisoning the land, he, by his unflinching firmness and courage, by his never-failing patience and gentleness and wisdom, by his simple and unwavering belief that right will triumph over wrong, brought his country safe through the horrors of Civil War, freed the slaves, saved the Union, and set the feet of America upon the path of liberty and justice, from which it has never looked

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